

# NEWS — from the — PEWS

Dear Parishioners,

Over 1 week ago, I was diagnosed with Covid19. This came as a result of a test taken following notification from the HSE that I had been a close contact with a Covid-positive case and the rapid onset of symptoms. Despite self-isolating, within 24 hours the family

had been tested and all, but Robert tested positive. Robert has since caught the virus too and The Rectory is now in lockdown! We could not believe the speed and efficiency of the HSE and our own GP around testing and rapid response.

Reminder texts were received on a daily basis regarding isolation and immediate phone calls received from the 'Contact Tracing' team.

From those working in the test centre in Wicklow Town to those who advised us by phone, the response was rapid and kind.

I write to allay fears and to speak openly about the virus we all hear so much of from a distance. The news doesn't tend to report lesser cases but focuses on end-of-life and crisis in hospitals and this can be as disturbing for mental health and fearfulness within individual lives as the solitude that avoids the virus in the first place. I must draw attention to how easily this virus is transmitted and how rapidly it spreads throughout a household and remind you to clean all groceries you receive by delivery. The symptoms differ for every individual but with us it has attacked our central nervous system with days of dizziness, body pain and fever. Thankfully none of us suffered any respiratory problems with this virus which can be the main cause of hospitalisation.

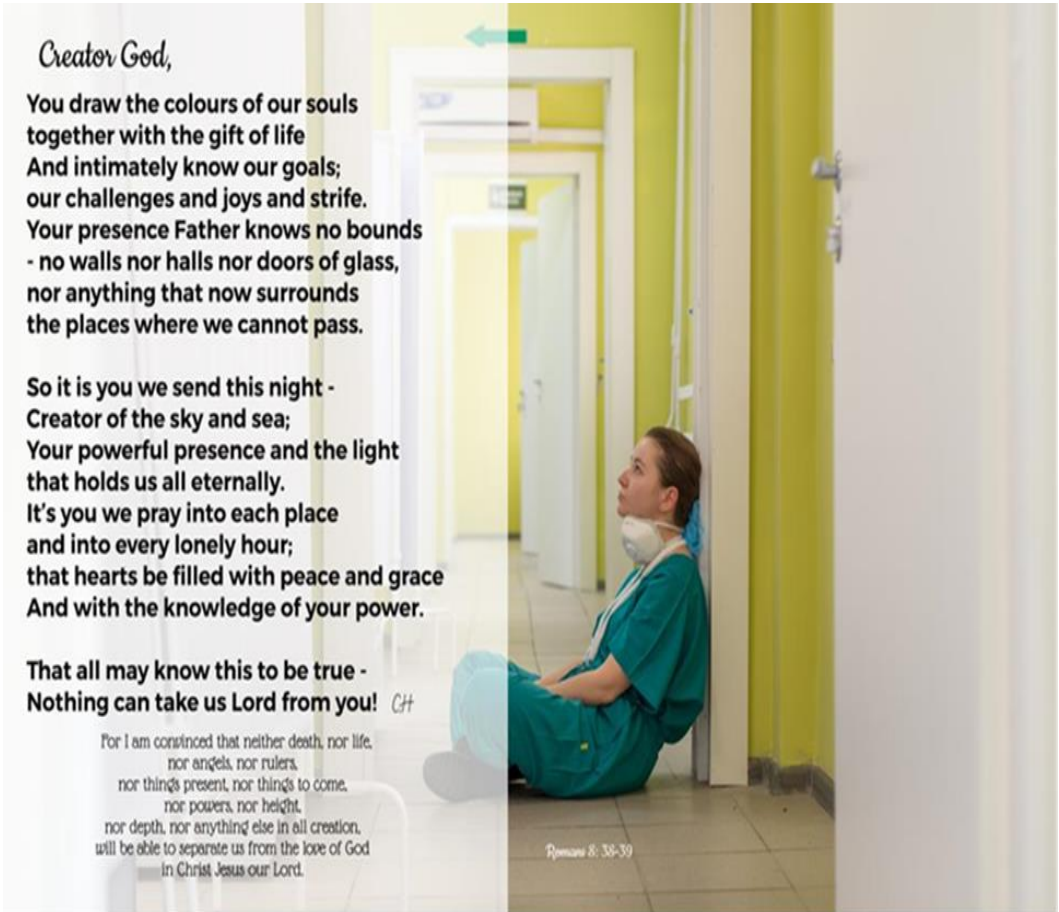
*Thank  
you* 

We are all at different stages of recovery but are finding this a slow process. Never before in my lifetime have, I experienced anything that took everything energy-wise to fight and stayed within the system for so long. As I write I still feel its presence in my head and in constant tiredness, however, this is a virus that is survivable, however lengthy with 80% of those who contract it experiencing complete recovery. Rest and patience are required.

As your Rector, I struggle with the length of time this is taking as my mind is quick to tell me I should be back at work and yet a voice of caution within myself is saying that there is a far greater risk of relapse and further absence if I don't handle this properly. As a result, I have removed myself from Parochial activities until myself and the family are completely well again. Both the Archbishop and Archdeacon have been informed and in my absence the Rev. Rob Clements, Rector of Kilternan has kindly agreed to handle emergency calls. I thank him sincerely for this. (Tel: 01-2952643). I dearly miss creating the Online Services and hope that their absence across the social media spectrum will not see people fall away. These services will resume as soon as health permits.

Finally, I would like to send a huge thank you to this community of faith for the myriad of messages of good will, deliveries of soup, bread and cakes to the doorstep and underlying prayers and support at this time. The Rectory family are really grateful and feel utterly surrounded by care. Hope is what we celebrated at Christmas and this hope continues stronger than ever in this remarkable community. My prayer for all of you is for safety and careful vigilance; the love and support of each other and God's protection around and among you at this time.

With every blessing,  
Cathy, Ed and Family.



*Creator God,*

**You draw the colours of our souls  
together with the gift of life  
And intimately know our goals;  
our challenges and joys and strife.  
Your presence Father knows no bounds  
- no walls nor halls nor doors of glass,  
nor anything that now surrounds  
the places where we cannot pass.**

**So it is you we send this night -  
Creator of the sky and sea;  
Your powerful presence and the light  
that holds us all eternally.  
It's you we pray into each place  
and into every lonely hour;  
that hearts be filled with peace and grace  
And with the knowledge of your power.**

**That all may know this to be true -  
Nothing can take us Lord from you! CH**

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,  
nor angels, nor rulers,  
nor things present, nor things to come,  
nor powers, nor height,  
nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*Romans 8: 38-39*

*Dear Parishioners,*

The joint Vestries of Powerscourt with Kilbride parishes send their prayers and best wishes to Rev. Cathy, her husband Ed and all the family on their journey of recovery from COVID. We all know how vigilant Rev. Cathy was in relation to health and safety around church services and pastoral care, since March 2019 and whilst like everyone else, they were following the rules, they fell victims too.

Parishioners have welcomed not only *News from the Pews* but also the online Sunday Services which Rev. Cathy ran so professionally and seamlessly and which we all looked forward to tuning in to on a weekly basis. It has kept us in touch with liturgy, connected us to each other through weekly readings, reflections and the environment on our doorstep. Rev. Cathy is very saddened that the online services have been suspended for the time being, but she looks forward to resuming them as soon as her health permits.

It's worth reflecting that the online Service takes considerable planning, whether it is in the Church or outside on the bench from the Graveyard or under the chestnut tree with Copperpot and the hens. Then a sermon has to be prepared, collect, reflections and readers. Anyone who has participated as a reader will know the effort it takes – and how many *dry runs* it takes before you are happy that you haven't stuttered over a word, mispronounced a biblical word or just looked uncomfortable when the camera is focused on you. Can you imagine the time it takes Rev Cathy and her expert videographer (aka Ed) to record each Service? They are a great team and we appreciate all their dedication and commitment to spreading the word of God amongst all of us.

We ask everyone to keep Rev. Cathy, Ed and the family in your prayers and be sure to keep in touch through Mandy in the Parish Office. If anyone has any articles, photos or news they would like to share, please get in touch with Mandy.

Please stay safe everyone and mind each other.

Barbara Davis  
Hon Secretary  
Powerscourt

Georgina Masterson  
Hon Secretary  
Kilbride



## **Kilbride News**

A belated thanks to everyone who helped decorate the church for the Christmas services – a little bit more subdued than usual but the church looked lovely – as the church was going into lockdown again after the Christmas Day service those attending were asked

to take some flowers home with them. The church is now bare of all decorations and had a “lick and a promise” from the Spring clean fairy.

Belated congratulations to Jenna on the birth of her baby boy – George and to Caroline on the birth of her baby girl – Ella – a grand-daughter for Terry & Jacinta.

Those who are sick at home or in Hospital are very much on our minds at this time and we remember them in our thoughts and prayers.

We do look forward to re-opening the church again for services when we are allowed to do so but until then please keep safe and keep well.

Submitted by Georgina Masterson

## **Are you in need help with your Garden?**

This time of year, can be overwhelming with the late winter clean up. However, we have received a wonderful gift of help to any parishioner who might be struggling to get garden jobs done. Whether it is chopping wood, clearing leaves, weeding, branch trimming or whatever is needed. This really is a very kind offer from an experienced professional who is very generously donating time to the parish.



If you would like to take up the offer, please give me a call in the office on 2863862. Office hours are 8.15 -12.15 daily, otherwise you could send me an email on Powerscourtparish@gmail.com.



## **Percival Forbes Steede, 1877-1957**

This headstone is of Wicklow granite, a favourite choice of material for local parishioners. Unfortunately, the rough surface wears badly, and though it is a relatively recent memorial, the inscription is already difficult to read.

Mr Steede was the teacher at Powerscourt National school from 1907 until 1942, and the stone also commemorates his mother Frances (nee Walsh), who died in 1924, his sister Eva Jane, and his aunt Kathleen Walsh. The Schoolhouse was exceedingly small to accommodate so many, but later Mr Steede lived in "Ardee" across the square. Perhaps they were not all resident in the Schoolhouse at the same time. Eva Steede helped the family budget by teaching the girls sewing. If you were naughty you were not allowed the privilege of the sewing class.



Mr Steede is well remembered by older members of the parish today, who can still tell stories about their time in his classroom.

Percy Steede was also invaluable as the organist of Powerscourt church, a post which he fulfilled for 50 years. There are still carefully bound choir books with home-made covers in the church with his name on them. When he became less proficient with age, the Vestry attempted to make him retire, but a petition was drawn up in the parish to have him reinstated. The Vestry minutes comment tersely, that " no action needs to be taken".

The parish rose to the occasion on his death when a collection was made to pay for this headstone, with the names also of those relations who predeceased him. The residue of the fund, some £40, was to be invested at 5 1/2% for the benefit of the school.

The inscription reads: His friends and former pupils erected this stone/in loving memory of /Percival Forbes Steede, /Principal of Powerscourt School 1907-1947. /Organist 1907-1952. /Died 20 th July 1957. /And of his mother Frances /his sister Eva/his aunt, Kathleen Walsh.

- Percy Steedes's brother was Mansfield Richard Steede, the First Officer on the Empress of Ireland, an ocean liner which collided with a Norwegian steamer in the St Lawrence in Canada and sank with the loss of 1000 lives. This was in 1914, only two years after the sinking of the Titanic. Mansfield was off duty when the collision took place, but his quick reaction to the emergency saved many lives. Thanks to him, the Marconi engineer was able to send signals to nearby shipping before the Empress sank, in 15 minutes, taking Mansfield with her.

# Solitude.

Solitude can mean many things to many people. Some would say it is a good thing to be able to spend time alone and for some that can be a place of support and respite. While creating close bonds of friendship and relationship in our lives is important, being able to spend time alone is also important to minding our mental health and deepening our connection to self. But what if it is enforced solitude? Since late December our country has been forced back into yet another lockdown. Yes, we know all the very valid reasons and the importance of adhering to the strict guidelines in order to protect ourselves and each other, but for many this can mean being alone for long periods causing anxiety and stress. It can be very difficult and frightening to be with ourselves and our own thoughts which overtime can become negative and chip away at our self-esteem. I am again reminded of what Tara Brach says, “*our thought are not facts, our*





*thoughts are just thoughts*". Often a way of coping is to 'take flight' into busyness and fill our time with a myriad of distractions. But right now, that is not an option.

So, what are the choices open to us in our enforced solitude? For me throughout this pandemic nature has been a huge support and nurturance for my body and soul. I recently heard someone talking about the fifteen minutes 'Awe Walk'. He explained this as going out for a fifteen-minute walk and shifting from our inner focus of self to the external focus of what is happening around us. He suggests looking for things that are amazing or magical, or I would even suggest the very ordinary that is around us. External focus can help to lift our mood and ignite all our senses. Hildegard of Bingen an eleventh century German Mystic was particularly close to nature and is quoted as saying "*All creation is a symphony of joy and jubilation*".

I know not everyone may be physically mobile but sitting looking out through our window and 'noticing' what is around while different to an 'awe walk' has the potential also to bring us out of our head and into our heart. We can have our thoughts, we can feel them, but we can also let them go. We can use solitude as a door to connect with our heart. Can we give ourselves permission to rest and be still and befriend our solitude.....perhaps it has much to teach us.

*'Solitude' - Submitted by Sheila Lindsay*  
*'Sunrise on St. Stephen's Day' Photo by Robert Neill*



[24 - 30 January 2021](#)

*Children's Activity Sheet:*

[24th January 2021 Activity Sheet.pdf](#)

[Do something different](#) - **Related Bible reading(s): Mark 1.14-20**

*You may also need the following links:*

**Imagine:** [youtu.be/PJTvFMtWh98](https://youtu.be/PJTvFMtWh98)

**Daily prayer:** [Methodist Covenant Prayer study.pdf](#)

**Discover:** Alternative links to be provided

**Walk:** [www.loc.gov/poetry/180/133.html](http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/133.html)



*Sometimes it's hard to find things to do with children to fill the days at home. Why not visit our Dioceses Facebook Page for ideas!*

<https://www.facebook.com/Dublin-Glendalough-Kids-107738287592834>



***Our Living Room will resume in the coming weeks. It has proven to be a very active group.***

Our Living Room concept began by embracing the Wednesday Fellowship Group and encouraging it to expand. The Group now takes time to review Portraits of the Scriptures and it's amazing

what emerges in conversation through the workings of the Holy Spirit! Now, under present restrictions, this little group has expanded even further as it is now held as a zoom meeting and possible for people to attend who may not be from the locality. With this in mind we encourage you to join us on Wednesday Mornings at am on Zoom. If you would like to take part in this group please contact the Rector at [cathyhallissey@hotmail.com](mailto:cathyhallissey@hotmail.com).

All videos can be found on our Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Grouped-Parishes-of-Powerscourt-with-Kilbride-1514315732033467>

or on our Parishes YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOXYER9cLb4mj3tuNcYdExQ>